

The Creators Project

Assemblage Paintings Address the Perils of White Masculinity

Andrew Nunes — Jul 12 2016



Need for Speed, 2016, Mike Shultis. All images courtesy of the artist and Diane Rosenstein Gallery

Artist Mike Shultis (<http://michaelshultis.com>) re-evaluates his own culture as a white American male in *All American*, an ongoing solo exhibition at LA's Diane Rosenstein Gallery (<http://dianeroseinstein.com/>). The exhibition consists of a series of mixed-media paintings that are Rauschenberg-esque in their use of un-painterly materials assembled onto the canvas.

Car dealership inflatable-tube-men pop out of canvases like cartoon genitalia. Decontextualized Red Bull logos become symbols of overt male aggression. The phrase "Mein bad" and the word "Fear" are repeated like disturbing slogans for toxic masculinity. In a world overrun by the overarching influence of white males and masculine culture, Shultis' works offer moments to reevaluate what that identity represents.



Schrecklichkeit, 2016

"In this body of work I'm specifically focusing on male aggression/violence, sexism, sexuality in an internet porn era, addiction to stimulants, and racism," Shultis tells The Creators Project.

"Most of the pieces in *All American* include myself in the work and are direct references to a particular story in my life or a clear relationship I have with a chosen subject matter. In certain works, I feel like I'm holding up a mirror to not only our society but also myself."

Regarding his deliberate decision to focus on white male culture, Shultis believes he has a duty to participate in identity politics, even if it manifests as a criticism of his own demographic group: "I find that most of the problems in our current cultural moment can be attributed to the white American male. Since I am a white American male, I feel a sense of responsibility to not only explore masculinity and whiteness, but also reflect the inherent problems within those groups in our culture," says Shultis. "I think it's for the exact reasons artists shy away from masculinity that I feel inclined to make work about those themes and shine a light on something we know exists but choose to ignore."



Fear, Fear, 2016



Boy Scout, 2015, Mike Shultis



Wild Wild West, 2015-2016, Mike Shultis



All American Installation View, Mike Shultis

All American is on view at [Diane Rosenstein Gallery \(http://dianerosestein.com\)](http://dianerosestein.com) until August 12, 2016. To see more of Mike Shultis' works, click [here \(http://michaelsultis.com\)](http://michaelsultis.com).